

"sounds English" and that the chant may possibly derive from "longshoremen, because of the contempt expressed for the sailor" in the last lines of the chant. She also states that these chants were never sung, but rather recited with "strong rhythmic emphasis," usually accompanied by active motion. "We accompanied (the particular chant here cited) with a very inexpert but joyous tapdance." The chants she offers are also described as usually an "indulgence of smaller groups (of children), sometimes composed of siblings only."

This same chant, with but minor variations, was during my own boyhood distinctly the favorite of boys and young teenagers in a small, rural community in northwestern Pennsylvania during the decade 1910-20. I was born and raised in this community, which was also predominantly of Anglo-Saxon derivation (with a sprinkling of Pennsylvania German families), but distinctly lacking in New York City or any other kind of private school affiliation. I am sure few if any of the natives had ever been in New York City, or in any other city of metropolitan size. The chant here also was rapidly rhythmically recited, rather than sung; but in our community it was never accompanied by a jig or dance. It was definitely limited to boys, but not to the small kinship groups Stimson suggests for New York City.

The Pennsylvania rural version is as follows (with variations from the New York City version here indicated in *italics*):

I went down town to buy a penny *drum*;  
*I rapped* on the door and no *body* come,  
*I knocked* at the window and broke a pane of glass,  
And *out* came a *monkey* sliding on his ass.  
The *monkey* shit a *baboon*, and the *baboon* shit a flea,  
The flea shit a sailor, *and the sailor* went to sea.  
Oh, the wind *did roar* and the rain *did pour*,  
And the sailor shit his *britches*, and he had to go to shore.

There was also a still more vulgar next-to-the-last line, which was frequently favored by the boys of our community. Although a somewhat devilish ditty, it will be noted that there is no Devil in the rural Pennsylvania version. It should also be stated, I think, that the northwestern Pennsylvania community (in Crawford County) of which I write is 500 miles from an oceanic body of water. This does not, of course, preclude the "English waterfront" origin that Stimson somewhat gingerly suggests. Personally, however, I see no "contempt for the sailor" such as Stimson ascribes to its last lines. Also the minor, but possibly crucial, variation in the last word of the first line, makes the stanza "sound" much less "English" to me than Stimson's version sounds to her.

There is no such thing as a "penny drum," I suppose; but this would not in the least, of course, deter children from making an allusion to such an article. When reciting the chant, I always envisioned (and still imagine) a small boy going to a store to buy a cheap, tin, toy drum; certainly small boys would not go to buy a penny's worth of rum. And this boy did so with the quite unexpected consequences of the sequel, irrespective of which version of the chant one may personally prefer.

The methodological moral, I suppose, is that one should never build a thesis of origin upon a single word, especially when it occurs in a folkloristic form as fluid as popular chants and songs are. Library research may reveal the origin of this chant, and it may possibly prove Stimson to be right. This sort of research is, of course, what is needed, rather than the kind of speculation Stimson and I are here indulging in—a methodological vice, it must be confessed, not entirely unknown to the folkloristic fraternity.

*Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, Pennsylvania*

MAURICE A. MOOK

THE DAISY CHAIN:—Most of us are acquainted with the term "daisy chain" as applied to sexual activity of some kind, carried on by a number of people in a chainlike manner,

so that each person is involved in two activities at the same time. In this sense, the use of the term seems to be quite widespread, seemingly indicating a fairly long tradition of usage. But when and where did this innocuous sounding term originate? The various dictionaries of slang and vulgar usage yield surprisingly little information. It is not listed in John S. Farmer and W. E. Henley's seven-volume *Dictionary of Slang and Its Analogues* (1890-1904), nor in H. N. Cary's five-volume *Sexual Vocabulary* (1916-20). Indeed, I have been able to find it in only three places: Justinian's (pseud.) *Americana Sexualis* (1939), Harold Wentworth and Stuart Berg Flexner's very recent *Dictionary of American Slang* (1960), and G. Legman's glossary to George W. Henry's *Sex Variants* (1941). Only Wentworth and Flexner refer to a primary source (S. Longstreet's *The Pedlocks*) and that is dated 1951. The Justinian volume notes it as a twentieth-century American low colloquialism, but offers no references. However, if it is correct, this explains the omission from Farmer and Henley's comprehensive work, a late nineteenth-century English compilation. The omission from Cary, an American work compiled about 1916 to 1920, is more surprising, unless we accept the contention of some that the compilation is largely a plagiarism of Farmer and Henley. My own acquaintance with the term goes back to my sophomore year in high school, about 1941, and its use seemed quite widespread at that time. Legman, in a recent communication, states that he recalls it from the 1930's and even has a vague recollection of an allusion to it in an early *Esquire* cartoon. Can anyone carry it back further, preferably by means of printed or manuscript references? And can anyone shed light on why it is *daisy chain*; is there any relationship to the innocent flower chain games that were popular a century or more ago, or to the traditional Vassar College sophomore commencement escort for seniors (cf. Fred M. Hechinger, "A Century of the College Girl," *New York Times Magazine*, 23 October 1960, p. 38)?

*Indiana University  
Bloomington, Indiana*

FRANK A. HOFFMANN